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Global targets on ageing for the year 2001: a practical strategy

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	2
II.	BACKGROUND	4 - 10	3
III.	GLOBAL TARGETS ON AGEING FOR THE YEAR 2001	11 - 13	5
IV.	SHORT GUIDE FOR SETTING NATIONAL TARGETS ON AGEING	14 - 22	17

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 46/91 of 16 December 1991, 46/94 of 16 December 1991 and 45/106 of 14 December 1990, called for a set of global targets on aging for the year 2001. It requested that special attention be given to practical strategies, identifying in detail the key agencies and the necessary means for reaching the targets. The global targets should provide a pragmatic focus for the broad and ideal goals of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, and accelerate its implementation into the next millenium. The global targets should support Member States in setting national targets on ageing. They should be developed through broad consultations, coordinated by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The Assembly, futhermore, decided to devote four plenary meetings at its forty-seventh session to an International Conference on Ageing at which, inter alia, it will review the global targets.

2. The present report has been prepared in response to the above mandates. After giving background information in section II, in section III it proposes eight global targets on ageing for the year 2001, together with some enabling steps for each one. It then sets out, in section IV, a short guide for setting national targets. In developing the text, consultations were held with Governments, United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, non-governmental organizations, experts and interested individuals. Draft global targets and related enabling steps were made available for comment at the ad hoc working group of the thirty-second session of the Commission for Social Development, the fourth United Nations inter-agency meeting on ageing, the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly (A/46/361, annex), and several other meetings, including sessions of non-governmental committees on ageing at Vienna and in New York. Formal consultations ended with a small expert group meeting at Vienna from 23 to 26 March 1992.

3. A thorough review was made of all proposals, including several with financial implications. A modest but workable strategy was finally developed, based on two criteria: first, available financial resources and secondly, involvement of the broad network of agencies and organizations currently cooperating with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs as the United Nations focal point on ageing. Opportunities for integrating ageing into existing programmes and activities are emphasized. The global targets, therefore, reflect a pragmatic approach, one that seeks opportunities for increasing implementation of the Plan of Action. As such, the targets are essentially promotional. Technical targets were considered at an early stage, but the necessary resources for developing these were not available.

II. BACKGROUND

4. With 124 Member States participating, the World Assembly on Ageing adopted the International Plan of Action on Ageing in 1982. 1/ The Plan was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/51 of 3 December 1982 and has served as the blueprint for the development of ageing policies and programmes over the decade 1982 to 1991. The broad and ideal goals of the Plan, however, have not been reached.

5. The world population is ageing dramatically. A steady stream of 1 million persons a month now cross the threshhold of age 60, and 80 per cent of these are in developing countries. The total numbers of those aged 60-and-above have grown from 200 million in 1950 to 400 million in 1982 and are projected to reach 600 million in the target year 2001 and go on to reach 1.2 billion in the year 2025 - at which time over 70 per cent of them will be living in what are today's developing countries. The numbers of the "old" old, those aged 80 years and above, have grown even more dramatically: from 13 million individuals in 1950, to over 50 million today, to 137 million in 2025. This is the fastest growing population group in the world, projected to grow by a factor of 10 between 1950 and 2025, compared with a factor of six for those 60-and-above, and a factor of little more than three for the total population. Expressed another way, the world population in 2025 will be three times greater than it was in 1950; the 60-and-above population will be six times greater and the 80-and-above group will be 10 times the size it was in 1950.

6. These snapshots serve as small illustrations of a far-reaching if quiet demographic revolution now affecting the social and economic structures of societies. Industrialized countries are grappling with the complexities of adapting national policies and programmes to the ageing of populations; developing countries less so. Yet developing countries will be ageing faster while simultaneously their family systems - the traditional first resource and last resort of older people - seem to be changing, their care-giving capacity weakening. The ageing of populations presents developing countries with a particular challenge: how to develop an indigenous response, and how to do so rapidly. For all countries, the foremost challenge lies in identifying and supporting the new opportunities for older persons and the benefits for society that arise from the ageing of populations.

7. Clearly, the challenge is great. Responses have been guided by the Plan of Action. Awareness and initiatives have spread during the decade. Recent measures by the General Assembly have had a wide impact: in resolution 45/106, the Assembly designated 1 October as the International Day for the Elderly; by its resolution 46/91, the Assembly adopted the United Nations Principles for Older Persons and launched a global information campaign on ageing for 1992. The International Institute on Ageing was established in Malta in 1988. The African Society of Gerontology was established in 1989, and resource mobilization is getting under way under the leadership of the Banyan Fund Association: A World Fund for Ageing, established in 1991.

8. The present document outlines what is feasible at this time. It seeks a more effective use of existing structures, procedures and resources. It was developed collaboratively and is intended to be implemented in the same way. And it assumes a vision of ageing that integrates the full participation of older persons in their societies and care for those who need it. It recognizes that implementing the Plan is an evolving process and anticipates yet further developments, as resources and political support are forthcoming.

9. Several enabling steps are given for each global target, but the following measures are essential for all:

(a) Continuing dialogue, cooperation and initiative by all bodies engaged in the target strategies;

(b) Assessing periodically United Nations infrastructure and resources being devoted to ageing, especially the regular and extrabudgetary resources available to the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in its role as lead and coordinating agency of the global targets;

(c) Availing of the biennial United Nations inter-agency meetings on ageing for coordinating system-wide target strategies;

(d) Convening one or more regional meetings on target-setting in each world region - two Asian countries have already expressed interest in hosting such meetings;

(e) Elaborating bilateral and multilateral programmes of cooperation between Member States, United Nations agencies and bodies, and non-governmental organizations to be focused on reaching selected targets;

(f) Including older persons as active participants in development programmes, and in family and community life;

(g) Measuring progress towards reaching the targets during the quadrennial review of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/51.

10. The ultimate purpose of the global targets is to support national responses to the ageing of populations, to ensure an age-integrated society and to create an environment where the talents of older people find full expression and their care needs are met. When older persons are active, creative, contributing as well as caring and cared-for, younger age groups will know that their future can be bright. Thus, for many millions of older people today, and for countless more in the future, it is hoped that by the beginning of the third millenium this document will have proven itself a useful tool and the herald of "new age for old age".

III. GLOBAL TARGETS ON AGEING FOR THE YEAR 2001

11. The eight global targets on ageing for the year 2001 were developed cooperatively and assume continuing cooperation in the strategies set out for each one. The International Plan of Action on Ageing underscores the importance of international cooperation, seeing it as essential to achieving its goals (Plan of Action, paras. 94-101). The Centre, as the United Nations focal point on ageing, has been urged by the participants in target-setting, to initiate action for global targets 1 through 3 and to act as facilitator for targets 4 through 8. The Centre would evaluate and report on progress for all targets.

12. A wide range of collaborating entities is expected to support the target strategies in keeping with their mandates, interests, and resources. The target strategies comprise core activities, permitting expansion and adjustment in the course of the decade as experience is gained. Collaborative arrangements are thus expected to evolve in the course of the decade.

13. The proposed target strategies are as follows:

Global target No. 1: support countries in setting national targets on ageing

Purpose

To support government-designated national bodies, at their request, in setting national targets on ageing, together with related strategies. As countries set targets, international exchanges and joint projects could be expanded; the transfer of aid, skills and technologies could be improved. From past experience, it might be expected that 40 per cent of participating States will have set targets by 1996, and 70 per cent by 2000. A short guide to setting national targets on ageing is given in section IV.

National mechanisms on ageing will lead target-setting in many countries. At present, 93 Governments have designated national mechanisms on ageing. These generally comprise ministries, agencies, institutes, non-governmental organizations concerned with ageing, and/or representatives of the elderly.

Enabling steps

All entities concerned would endeavour to:

(1) Promote regional meetings and training workshops on target-setting for national mechanisms on ageing (1993 ongoing);

(2) Facilitate provision of advisory services to countries, at their request, in establishing or developing national mechanisms and/or target strategies (1994 and ongoing);

(3) Present and highlight national targets at biennial United Nations inter-agency meetings on ageing as well as in periodic reports and in the Bulletin on Ageing (1994 and ongoing);

(4) Identify an interested agency for establishing and coordinating regional networks of the chief executives of national mechanisms to assist each other in setting targets and formulating related strategies (1994 and ongoing).

Entities concerned:

Governments

National mechanisms on ageing

United Nations regional commissions and other regional bodies

United Nations specialized agencies and bodies

Funding agencies

Training institutes

Non-governmental organizations

Others

Resource mobilization

Interested development aid agencies and national mechanisms are invited to assign extrabudgetary resources for steps (1) and (2); and the Centre is invited to assign staff within its work plan for step (3) and for overall coordination, evaluation and reporting.

National mechanisms on ageing are invited to seek support in setting national targets on ageing as needed and to support the centre as possible liaison and administrative support for step (4) and others, in keeping with national interest and capacity.

Evaluation/reporting

The quadrennial review and appraisal of the implementation of the Plan of Action would: (a) assess the extent to which the goals set out in the purpose statement of this target have been reached; (b) assess the extent and type of support needed in setting and reaching national targets; and (c) elicit up-to-date information on each national mechanism for inclusion in its ongoing publication "Profiles of National Mechanisms on Ageing".

Reports to United Nations legislative bodies would review the progress made in reaching this target.

Global target No. 2: generate support for integrating ageing into national and international development plans and programmes

Purpose

To ensure that countries wishing to adjust national development plans and resource allocation to respond to population ageing can receive the expert advice and assistance of international development agencies.

Enabling steps

All entities concerned would endeavour to:

(1) Promote information exchange and training for development planners at international and national levels, encompassing macro and micro approaches to ageing and focusing on the developmental potential of older persons (1993 and ongoing);

(2) Identify resources needed to expand the Centre's developing country research project to include 12 additional countries (1993 to 1999) in order to:

(a) Assess the contributions, remunerated and unremunerated, of the elderly to development using data disaggregated by gender and age;

(b) Identify the health, institutional, environmental, cultural and educational factors that limit the contribution of the elderly to development;

(c) Assess the economic and social effects of development programmes on the elderly;

(3) Identify an interested agency for establishing and maintaining a database on ageing and development (1994 and ongoing) by:

(a) Developing protocols that keep data on participants disaggregated by age and gender;

(b) Identifying and documenting development programmes that have a component on ageing;

(c) Identifying and documenting research activities that address development and ageing;

(d) Identifying and documenting funding opportunities for development and ageing programmes;

(4) Facilitate the convening of a meeting of development aid agencies to address the development potential of older people in developing countries (1995);

(5) Integrate the subject of ageing into relevant United Nations inter-agency meetings for such issues as population, women, disabled persons, youth, family and into strategies for the current and next United Nations Development Decade (ongoing).

Entities concerned:

National planning agencies, and national mechanisms on ageing

United Nations Development Programme

Department for Economic and Social Development

United Nations Population Fund

United Nations specialized agencies with a focus on planning

Non-governmental organizations with a focus on development

Other development and funding entities

Foundations, funds, agencies and institutes with a focus on ageing

Resource mobilization

Development aid agencies are invited to provide extrabudgetary funds for implementing steps (1) to (4); and to identify an agency for establishing the data bank suggested in step (3).

Evaluation and reporting

Reports to United Nations legislative bodies would review the progress made in reaching this target.

Global target No. 3: generate support for community-based programmes of care and participation of older persons

Purpose

To support local communities, in partnership with national mechanisms on ageing, in developing services and programmes in which the elderly are both agents and beneficiaries.

Enabling steps

All entities concerned would endeavour to:

(1) Assist local agencies and organizations in developing "productive ageing" programmes by:

(a) Gathering and disseminating information on the role of older people in micro-enterprise development, full- and part-time employment, provision of health-care, training and volunteering (1994 and ongoing);

(b) Providing advisory services for establishing a country-wide network of community "productive ageing" projects;

(c) Encouraging international organizations of employers, trades, professions and others to promote suitable retaining and re-employment opportunities for older workers (1995 and ongoing);

(d) Encouraging micro-enterprise banks to establish or expand institutional and individual revolving loan schemes for self-help projects by older persons at the community level (1995 and ongoing);

(e) Establishing an international network for exchange of information and experience on small scale self-help projects by older persons;

(2) Assist local agencies and organizations in developing integrated community care programmes by:

(a) Gathering and disseminating information about cooperation of the formal and informal sectors in providing home and community care for the frail elderly, including family counselling and training, respite care, help in housekeeping, meals, transportation services and others (1994 and ongoing);

(b) Providing advisory services at the request of national mechanisms for establishing a network of country-wide community care projects (1994 and ongoing);

(3) Explore the feasibility of convening an international meeting on older persons in community development. This meeting could, simultaneously, serve as a preparatory committee for a possible world assembly of older persons to be convened at a later date if sufficient interest and resources are raised.

Entities concerned:

Governments

International Labour Organisation

World Health Organization

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Volunteers

United Nations Development Programme

Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

United Nations trust funds for ageing, women and disabled persons

Banyan Fund

Non-governmental organizations

Senior volunteer corps

Development aid agencies

Others

Resource mobilization

Development aid agencies are invited to support this target.

Evaluation and reporting

Reports to United Nations legislative bodies would review the progress made in reaching this target.

Global target No. 4: improve cross-national research on ageing, including harmonization of terminology and methodology

Purpose

To identify and promote current efforts at harmonizing research terminology and methodology on ageing in order to improve and expand cross-national research, especially in developing countries.

Enabling steps

All entities concerned would endeavour to:

(1) Select a focal point among themselves to register current efforts towards methodological harmonization (1993 and ongoing);

(2) Disseminate through existing journals information on the harmonization of definitions, terminology and research methodology (1994 and ongoing);

(3) Develop a set of indicators based *inter alia* on the human development indicators of United Nations Development Programme to help measure the impact of policies and programmes on the wellbeing of the elderly (1995 and ongoing);

(4) Organize consultations, at the World Congress of Gerontology at Adelaide, Australia, to examine progress made in reaching this target and to identify research priorities and approaches for the future (1997);

(5) Expand the capabilities of developing countries for research on ageing (ongoing);

(6) Promote collaboration and equitable funding between researchers on ageing in developed, developing and transitional countries (ongoing).

Resource mobilization

Entities concerned are invited to include all or some of the above strategies in their work and budget programmes during the next decade, and seek extrabudgetary funds as necessary.

Evaluation and reporting

Reports to United Nations legislative bodies would review the progress made in reaching this target.

Global target No. 5: include an item on ageing in international events and meetings of relevance

Purpose

To raise awareness of the impact of population ageing, the need for individuals to make lifelong preparation for old age, the varied roles of older people in society, and the value of a caring society.

Entities concerned:

Governments

United Nations agencies and bodies

Non-governmental organizations

Others

Enabling steps

The Centre would endeavour to:

(1) Maintain and publish annually a calendar of international activities during the years 1992 to 2001 to facilitate advance preparations for incorporating ageing in a wide range of development conferences and significant events, and to facilitate the participation of older persons in these activities.

Collaborating entities would:

(2) Inform the Centre of international meetings and events for inclusion in the calendar and will disseminate the calendar in their newsletters;

(3) Examine the possibility of highlighting ageing issues in, inter alia, the following meetings, events and special observances:

(a) International meetings:

World Conference on Human Rights, 1993

International Conference on Population and Development, 1994

Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, 1995

Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, 1995

(b) Significant events:

International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples, 1993

International Year of the Family, 1994

Tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, 1995

(c) Special days/weeks:

World Religion Day (third Sunday of January)

International Women's Day (8 March)

World Home Economics Day (20 March)

World Health Day (7 April)

International Nurses' Day (12 May)

World Environment Day (5 June)

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June)

International Literacy Day (8 September)

International Day of Peace (third Tuesday of September)

International Day for the Elderly (1 October)

World Population Day (first Monday of October)

World Food Day (16 October)

United Nations Day (24 October)

World Development Information Day (24 October)

World AIDS Day (1 December)

International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (5 December)

Human Rights Day (10 December)

Entities concerned:

National mechanisms on ageing

United Nations agencies and bodies

Academic and research institutes, centres and foundations

Non-governmental organizations with a focus on research

International Association of Gerontology

International Institute on Ageing, Malta

Others

Resource mobilization

Existing information-exchange mechanisms would be used.

Evaluation and reporting

Reports to United Nations legislative bodies would review the progress made in reaching this target.

Global target No. 6: establish a global network of senior volunteers for social and economic development

Purpose

To draw on and channel the accumulated wisdom and skills of older persons in support of United Nations development, environment, and peace programmes.

Enabling steps

(1) The Centre would:

(a) Invite interested United Nations retirees and non-governmental organizations to form a Coordinating Board for promoting this target (1993);

(b) Provide the Coordinating Board with copies of global plans and programmmes of action to serve as the framework of action including in the areas of ageing, women, disabled persons, youth, family, crime prevention, and drug abuse control, environment and peace (1993).

(2) The Coordinating Board would:

(a) Assist in establishing and expanding national senior volunteer corps (1994 and onwards);

(b) Identify world-wide service opportunities for older persons and prepare related task-descriptions for wide dissemination throughout organizations of older persons (1995 and onwards);

(c) Arrange for training materials and courses to be organized for potential volunteers (1996 and onwards);

(d) Cooperate with United Nations Volunteers and other United Nations bodies and agencies as appropriate (ongoing);

(e) Explore the feasibility of assigning senior experts for periods of six months or more to assist the Centre in liaising with the Coordinating Board and in carrying out its other tasks as lead and coordinating agency of the global targets (ongoing);

(f) Explore feasibility of convening a world assembly of older persons (2001).

Entities concerned:

Governments

United Nations Volunteers

Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

United Nations retirees

Organizations of older persons

NGO Committees on Ageing in New York and Vienna

Others

Resource mobilization

The Coordinating Board, once established, is invited to seek extrabudgetary funds to promote senior volunteer initiatives.

Evaluation and reporting

The Coordinating Board for this target in cooperation with the NGO Committees on Ageing in New York and Vienna would assess progress made in reaching this target, which would be reviewed in reports to United Nations legislative bodies.

Global target No. 7: facilitate closer cooperation among non-governmental organizations on ageing

Purpose

To achieve cost-effectiveness in the activities of non-governmental organizations by facilitating cooperation and pooling of resources towards selected targets.

Enabling steps

All entities concerned would endeavour to:

(1) Incorporate the target strategies into their programming and planning cycles, and set their own distinct but complementary targets (1993 and ongoing);

(2) Participate in the committees on ageing in New York and Vienna for periodic consultations on reaching the global targets and on supporting national targets, aiming for close cooperation on selected tasks, and on the transfer of useful information, technology and resources to countries in development and transition (1993 and ongoing);

(3) Identify non-governmental organizations becoming active in the field of ageing and share information on these with the Centre for their inclusion on its mailing list and in its periodic directories of non-governmental organizations (1993 and ongoing).

Entities concerned:

NGO Committees on Ageing, Vienna and New York

Non-governmental organizations which have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

Non-governmental organizations having status with specialized agencies and regional commissions

Other non-governmental organizations

Resource mobilization

Entities concerned are invited to integrate steps (1) to (3) into their work programmes in accordance with their overall mandates.

Evaluation and reporting

Reports to United Nations legislative bodies would review the progress made in reaching this target.

Global target No. 8: facilitate closer cooperation among intergovernmental organizations on ageing

Purpose

To achieve synergy including cost-effectiveness from cooperation of United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies on the target strategies.

Enabling steps

All entities concerned would endeavour to:

(1) Incorporate these targets on ageing into their programming and planning cycles based on their mandates (ongoing);

(2) Examine the feasibility of setting distinct but complementary targets on ageing, especially for the five United Nations world regions (1993 and ongoing);

(3) Attend biennial inter-agency meetings on ageing, as appropriate and feasible, to achieve closer collaboration and seek cost-effectiveness in implementing the target strategies (1993, 1995, 1997, 1999);

(4) Develop country-level coordinated support for national mechanisms on ageing wishing to set targets and implement programmes and projects (1995 and onwards).

Entities concerned:

United Nations specialized agencies

United Nations bodies, including regional commissions

Other intergovernmental organizations

Resource mobilization

Entities concerned are invited to incorporate steps (1) to (4) into their work programmes, as relevant and feasible.

Evaluation and reporting

Reports to United Nations legislative bodies would review the progress made in reaching this target.

IV. SHORT GUIDE FOR SETTING NATIONAL TARGETS ON AGEING

14. To assist Member States in setting national targets on ageing for the year 2001, and in setting quantifiable national targets where feasible, as called for in General Assembly resolutions 46/91 and 46/94, respectively, the following guide has been prepared. It lists a number of options for selection by Member States as relevant to their needs and capabilities. It is organized according to the priority areas of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, such as infrastructure, health, housing, family, education, social welfare, and income security. The Plan of Action states that national strategies should be "conceived and phrased in terms of the traditions, cultural values and practices of each country or ethnic community, and ... adapted to the priorities and material capacities of each country or community" (Plan of Action, para. 26).

15. Governments are invited to set national targets on ageing, to establish an implementing and monitoring agency and to inform the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of these measures. The Centre will disseminate information on national target-setting among interested Member States and include it in reports for submission to United Nations legislative bodies, particularly in the quadrennial reviews of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing as called for in General Assembly resolution 37/51.

A. Basic national infrastructure targets

> "The success of this Plan of Action will depend largely on action undertaken by Governments to create conditions and broad possibilities for full participation of citizens, particularly the elderly ...
>
> "The establishment of interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery within Governments can be an effective means of ensuring that the questions of the aging of the population is taken into account in national development planning, that the needs of the elderly are given the attention they merit, and that the elderly are fully integrated into society" (Plan of Action, paras. 86 and 90).

16. Governments in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the private sector are invited to avail of the following guide in setting targets for national infrastructure, and to report on progress made in the quadrennial reviews of 1997 and 2001:

A.1 Strengthen or establish a national coordinating mechanism on ageing. A national coordinating mechanism is a Government-appointed body for developing and promoting implementation of the national strategy on ageing. It is usually composed of ministries, councils, departments, bureaux, commissions, committees, advisory groups, federations, representatives of the elderly, political or religious groups, and task forces.

A.2 Promote the establishment and effective functioning of organizations of older persons. The expertise and energy of older persons could be harnessed through these organizations to promote self-help, make contributions to policy and implement programmes for all age groups. These may include a national council of the elderly, pensioners organizations, and senior volunteers corps and others.

A.3 Promote the expansion or establishment of intergenerational policies and programming. Such programming will encourage mutual cooperation, support and exchange between youth and the elderly at the individual organizational levels.

A.4 Improve or establish standards with enforcement protocols for elderly care providers, including in-home, community-based and residential settings. These standards will help to ensure quality services for older persons wherever delivered.

A.5 Integrate the issues of ageing into national development plans. National Governments are urged to recognize, in planning and implementing development activities, the significance of population ageing and the capabilities of elderly persons, especially women, in the economic, cultural, political and social development of their countries and communities.

A.6 Strengthen or establish national education, training and research activities on ageing. The programme will organize education, training and retraining for persons engaged or interested in the field of ageing and others on the social, economic, development and health aspects of ageing. Research activities on ageing should be encouraged in existing research institutions as a basis for understanding the elderly and their concerns.

A.7 Ensure that national data collections include information which is gender and age specific. These will include current data and relevant forecasts on demographics, epidemiology, place of residence (rural/urban), labour-force participation by occupation and sector, unemployment, income and wages, cohort characteristics as well as other items relevant to the country.

A.8 Produce, disseminate and periodically update a national directory of public and private organizations concerned with ageing and of services and opportunities for and by older persons. The national coordinating mechanism will also encourage the publication and dissemination of similar community-level directories.

A.9 Produce and widely disseminate regular reports on the national ageing situation. These reports will be based on information gathered in the national data collections, the national directory and other information sources. The national coordinating mechanism

will encourage the publication and dissemination of similar community-level reports.

A.10 Establish mechanisms to examine and adjust existing legislation and practices for major omissions, contradictions, and discriminations with respect to older persons.

B. Health and nutrition targets

"While the rapidly increasing number of old people throughout the world represents a biological success for humanity, the living conditions of the elderly in most countries have by and large lagged behind those enjoyed by the economically active population ...

"A fundamental principle in the care of the elderly should be to enable them to lead independent lives in the community for as long as possible" (Plan of Action, paras. 52 and 62).

17. Governments, non-governmental organizations and other concerned entities, taking into account the Health for All targets of the World Health Organization, are invited to avail of the following guide in setting targets on health and nutrition and to report on progress in the quadrennial reviews of 1997 and 2001:

B.1 Launch a campaign on "Healthy Ageing" for all. This campaign will stress a holistic approach to health, with a balance between physical, intellectual, social, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing. It will be addressed to school children, as well as the public at large, and will aim at decreasing the risk of dependency in old age through an emphasis on avoidance of health-damaging habits and practices.

B.2 Establish national indices of health and disability among the aged.

B.3 Ensure that primary health care is available and accessible to the elderly. This will include the development and/expansion of community-based and in-home long-term care programmes which give special attention to the needs and preferences of older persons, especially older women. It will also embrace the evaluation and, where appropriate, revitalization and expansion of the use of traditional healing and disease prevention methods.

B.4 Encourage the establishment of a technical aids supply system. This will encompass funding and distribution of health accessories and equipment, with special attention to eye glasses, hearing aids and teeth prostheses, needed for prevention and treatment of age-related disorders.

B.5 Provide adequate nutrition, especially for the elderly at risk, including such groups as refugees, victims of disasters and those in isolation.

B.6 Strengthen or establish a public health programme ensuring accessibility to clean water and adequate sanitation for the elderly.

C. Housing and living environment targets

"Adequate living accommodations and agreeable physical surroundings are necessary for the well-being of all people, and it is generally accepted that housing has a great influence on the quality of life of any age group in any country. Suitable housing is even more important to the elderly, whose abodes are the centre of virtually all of their activities" (Plan of Action, para. 64).

18. Governments and non-governmental organizations, taking into account the principles and recommendations of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements focusing on older persons, are invited to avail of the following guide in setting targets on housing and the living environment and to report on progress made in the quadrennial reviews of 1997 and 2001:

C.1 Provide support for the elderly so they may continue living in their own homes as long as possible or choose alternative accommodation if their home is no longer suitable or desired. These supports may include in-home health and social services, home maintenance and rental assistance.

C.2 Provide barrier-free and community integrated accommodation and public facilities for the elderly in cities, towns and villages. This will include adapted owner-occupied dwellings or new flats in multigenerational housing estates and sheltered housing. Housing options for the elderly should be integrated in town and country planning.

C.3 Promote community education on personal security in the home and community. This will address accident-prevention and security against crime and abuse.

C.4 Provide and enhance accessibility and mobility for the elderly to work, social and health services and leisure facilities.

D. Family targets

"The family, regardless of its form or organization, is recognized as a fundamental unit of society. With increasing longevity, four- and five-generation families are becoming common throughout the world. The changes in the status of women, however, have reduced their traditional role as caretakers of older family members; it is necessary to enable the

family as a whole, including its male members, to take over and share the burden of help in and by the family" (Plan of Action, para. 66).

19. Governments and non-governmental organizations, taking into account the United Nations action plan for the International Year of the Family, are invited to avail of the following guide in setting targets on older persons in the family and to report on progress made in the quadrennial reviews of 1997 and 2001:

D.1 Develop and enhance skills whereby older men and women may fulfil their roles as family leaders, counsellors, and care-givers. This could also mean training for the elderly in consultation and mediation techniques and in transmitting and evaluating traditional values in new situations.

D.2 Promote, enhance and support family care-giving. This will include, among others, information and training on care-giving, housing and rental subsidies for multigenerational families, provision of respite care, remuneration for unpaid long-term care-giving and consideration of time spent on care-giving for pension-scheme calculations.

D.3 Establish support groups for families with special problems and special care-giving needs, such as those having to deal with dementia and physical disabilities.

D.4 Integrate the issue of ageing into national activities for the International Year of the Family (1994). Special attention will be given to the positive roles and contributions of older persons and to the areas mentioned above.

E. Education and media targets

"In many of the world's societies, the elderly still serve as the transmitters of information, knowledge, tradition and spiritual values: this important tradition should not be lost."

"...

"There is also a need to educate the general public with regard to the aging process. Such education must start at an early age in order that aging should be fully understood as a natural process. The importance of the role of the mass media in this respect cannot be overstated" (Plan of Action, paras. 74 and 76).

20. Governments, non-governmental organizations, educational bodies and the media, taking into account the principles, recommendations or activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization which focus on older persons, are invited to avail of the following guide in setting

targets on education and the media and to report on progress made in the quadrennial reviews of 1997 and 2001:

E.1 Launch information, education and communication campaigns on ageing to promote positive images of ageing and ageing as a subject of general social relevance in which everyone participates. These campaigns will be initiated by or directed towards policy makers, educators, practitioners, religious leaders, publicists, older persons, families, and the general public. These will be tied-in with observance of 1 October, the International Day for the Elderly.

E.2 Incorporate information on ageing in primary and secondary school curricula, as well as specialized information and courses on ageing in post-secondary level social, health, political, religious, economic, architecture, planning and design studies, among others.

E.3 Provide key roles for older persons as voluntary or paid resource persons in literacy programmes, public awareness campaigns and in education programmes on cultural traditions and heritage, the environment, substance abuse and other areas.

E.4 Provide literacy education and continuing education for older persons. These activities can be incorporated into existing educational institutions or through specialized agencies such as Universities of the Third Age.

E.5 Integrate the subject and activities of ageing into national events and meetings.

E.6 Disseminate and apply the United Nations Principles for Older Persons. Endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session in 1991, the 18 principles, briefly addressing questions of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity, are available in the official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). National entities are encouraged to translate the Principles into local languages and to disseminate them in print and audiovisual formats.

F. Social welfare targets

"Social welfare services can be instruments of national policy and should have as their goal the maximizing of the social functioning of the aging. They should be community-based and provide a broad range of preventive, remedial and developmental services for the aging, to enable them to lead as independent a life as possible in their own home and in their community, remaining active and useful citizens" (Plan of Action, para. 68).

21. Governments and non-governmental organizations, taking into account the principles and recommendations of the Developmental Social Welfare and Social Integration Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, are invited to avail of the following guide in setting targets on social welfare and to report on progress made in the quadrennial reviews of 1997 and 2001:

F.1 Enact legislation to ensure equitable access for older persons to social welfare services.

F.2 Examine and determine the most equitable and efficient mix of public and private incentives which encourage the development and provision of services and opportunities for older persons. As noted in recommendation 33 of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, this should include the reduction and elimination of "... constraints on informal and voluntary activities, and eliminate or relax regulations which hinder or discourage part-time work, mutual self-help and the use of volunteers alongside professional staff in providing social services or in institutions for the elderly" (Plan of Action, sect. III.A).

F.3 Give recognition to services providers, including informal care-givers of older persons, by providing training, adequate compensation and a positive public image.

F.4 Strengthen or establish community-based continuum of care programmes. These programmes should aim at developing supportive partnerships for care between the informal and formal sectors.

G. Employment/income security targets

"Many developed countries have achieved universal coverage through generalized social security schemes. For the developing countries, where many if not the majority of persons live at subsistence levels, income security is an issue of concern to all age groups. ... the social security programmes launched tend to offer limited coverage: in the rural areas, where in many cases most of the population lives, there is little or no coverage. Furthermore, particular attention should be paid, in social security and social programmes, to the circumstances of the elderly women ..." (Plan of Action, para. 72).

22. Governments, non-governmental organizations, worker and employer groups, taking into account the International Labour Organisation's principles and recommendations focusing on older persons, are invited to avail of the following guide in setting targets on employment and income security and to report on progress made in the quadrennial reviews of 1997 and 2001:

G.1 Institute a national programme to promote productive ageing. This programme will encourage individual and institutionally supported opportunities and access to credit for older persons so they may engage in income producing and/or voluntary service on behalf of themselves, their families and their communities. Such activities will include drawing on community-based skills banks of older persons, self-employment, the development of second careers, senior cooperatives and part-time jobs, including as trainers and teachers, health care providers and volunteers.

G.2 Establish, strengthen and implement schemes or strategies to provide income-security for all older persons at levels appropriate to the national economic and social infrastructure. This will entail a variety of approaches, including a flexible attachment to the workforce through continued productive work on a voluntary basis, adaptation of working conditions to the physical abilities of the older person, training and retraining, and remuneration and credit for contributions to the informal sector economy, including farming, care-giving and childcare. These approaches will be considered as well as more traditional public pension schemes based on direct payment to beneficiaries out of funds from taxation, other indirect income, or by returns on the beneficiaries' own contributions. In this context, special attention should be given to older women.

G.3 Establish a "safety net" where pension and other schemes do not exist or are inadequate. This will entail targeting resources to poor and needy groups of the elderly, with special attention given to the disabled, widowed, isolated, frail elderly and refugees.

G.4 Examine options available to older workers for flexible and gradual withdrawal from, and extension of, formal employment in accord with national and social infrastructures and resources. This will encourage businesses, especially larger employers, to initiate programmes that will contribute both to financial planning for old age and to exploring and developing opportunities for continued income-producing work.

Notes

1/ See Report of the World Assembly on Aging, Vienna, 26 July to 6 August 1982 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.16), chap. VI.